



# U.S. House of Representatives

## **2021 Compensation and Diversity Study**

### Frequently Asked Questions

November 2021

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These FAQs provide a brief overview of the data sources, methodology, and data interpretation used in development of the 2021 House Compensation and Diversity Study dashboards.

### Overall

#### How were House data collected?

In accordance with the Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) Legislative Branch report and the House Rules for the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives conducted a study of staff compensation, benefits, and demographics. All 11,233 House of Representative staffers (as of the close of the June 2021 monthly regular payroll) were contacted via email to request their participation in the survey. After the survey invitation was sent, 243 staffers responded stating they are no longer employed at the House, and five (5) new hires emailed the survey administrators asking for a link to participate in the study. Thus, the final population size was 10,995. A total of 5,777 House staff participated in the survey for a response rate of 52.5%. Staffers' data were used to conduct analyses and create these dashboards.

For more information regarding sample and study methodology, see the [2021 House Diversity and Compensation Study Methodology](#).

#### What are the differences between the dashboards?

The nine dashboards show different views of the House data captured from the 2021 House Compensation and Diversity Study.

- There are three House Demographics and Diversity dashboards:
  - **House Staff Demographics Representation: Part 1** provides the following summary demographics of the House staff who responded to the 2021 House Compensation and Diversity Study:
    - race
    - ethnicity
    - disability status
    - gender identity
    - transgender status
    - sexual orientation
    - education



- **House Staff Demographics Representation: Part 2** provides the following summary demographics of the House staff who responded to the 2021 House Compensation and Diversity Study:
  - age
  - faith
  - caregiving responsibilities
  - childhood caregiver's highest level of education (used to measure socioeconomic status)
  - military experience
- **House Labor Force Comparisons** displays the U.S. House of Representatives labor force compared to the U.S. labor force using data provided by the House of Representatives, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Civilian Labor Force (CLF), and Federal Workforce (FEDWF).
- There are six House Compensation, Benefits, and Job Characteristics dashboards:
  - **House Compensation** provides the annual salary of all U.S. House of Representatives positions and the pay increases and time since the last pay increase for those who participated in the survey. Additionally, annual salary of staffers is compared to similar jobs in the House in 2019, the Federal Government, and the private sector.
  - **House Office-Specific Benefits** shows the range of benefits offered by the U.S. House of Representatives to staff members. Additionally, many of the benefits are benchmarked to similar benefits found in the U.S. workforce, as reported by the BLS through their National Compensation Survey (NCS). This dashboard presents staff awareness and/or receipt of paid leave, paid leave rollover, commuter benefits, Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA) benefits, student loan repayment, and flexible work arrangements.
  - **House-Wide Benefits** presents a static view of benefits such as dental care, health care coverage, vision, life insurance, retirement, savings accounts, and other benefits offered to all benefits-eligible U.S. House of Representatives staffers.
  - **House Job Characteristics and Perceptions** provides a summary of staffer tenure, full-time and part-time status, hours worked, duty location, and office type (e.g., Member Office, House Officer). Additionally, this dashboard presents staffer perceptions of their job (e.g., satisfaction with benefits, inclusivity of climate, turnover intentions).
  - **House Hiring and Promotion Factors** depicts staffer reactions to items inquiring about the avenues through which they joined the U.S. House of Representatives workforce (i.e., previous work experience, method of entry into the U.S. House workforce), as well as time since last promotion. Additionally, this dashboard displays static results of Chief of Staff-specific

items regarding hiring, promotion, and pay raise decisions as well as compensation of interns.

- **Factors Influencing House Compensation, Benefits, and Job Perceptions** displays the results of several inferential statistical analyses conducted to examine potential differences and relationships between pay, benefits, perceptions, and staff demographics. The results displayed in the dashboard are static, as they reflect findings across the entire House.

### Have there been any changes in the methodology used to collect and analyze data between the 2019 and 2021 Compensation and Diversity studies?

Yes, there are two notable methodological changes between the two studies. In addition, there were a few differences in survey content between 2019 and 2021.

- Job titles from House Payroll and Benefits were used to classify staff by job type in 2021, while participants were required to self-select their job titles in 2019. While the House provided individual salary data for all House jobs in both years, salary data were only summarized from those who responded to the 2019 survey because of the inability to classify non-respondents by job type. In 2021, salary data for all House jobs (i.e., those who did and did not respond to the 2021 survey) are summarized. Thus, 2021 salary data is more comprehensive than in 2019.
- Federal government and private sector benchmark data for House overall in the House Compensation dashboard is calculated differently in 2021 than in 2019. In 2019, the House overall benchmark for federal government and private sector reflected the overall aggregated value of salary medians across all jobs in each specific labor force (e.g., all Federal employees). For the current (2021) study, the House overall benchmark for Federal government and private sector were calculated based on the average of salaries of jobs similar to House jobs and weighted based on the proportion of House employees in each job type. Note that this methodology of using the weighted average of salaries for similar job types was used to calculate benchmark data by office type (e.g., Member Offices, Committee/Leadership Offices) in both the 2019 and 2021 studies. This methodology was extended to the calculation of the House overall benchmark in 2021 because it is a more appropriate comparison.
- In 2019, the Gender Identity item gave respondents the option to select all that apply, and “Transgender” was an option within Gender Identity. In 2021, respondents could only select a single Gender Identity item and there was a separate Transgender Identity item. Because there were differences in how items were measured from 2019 to 2021, the format of 2019 data was re-structured to match that of 2021 data so that comparisons could be made within dashboards.
- Questions were added from the 2019 survey to glean additional data, such as:



- Disability status
- Caregiving responsibilities
- Childhood caregiver's highest level of education (used as a measure of socioeconomic status)
- Perceptions of Inclusion and whether leadership values diversity.

### What is the meaning of *n*?

*n* refers to the sample size or number of responses in each category (i.e., number of individuals who selected a particular response). When "*n*" and "total" are presented together, *n* refers to the number of survey respondents who identify with that category (e.g., gender, duty location) out of the total number of survey respondents.

### Why are there different *n* sizes for different categories?

The *n* sizes change based on the number of respondents to each question. For example, the *n* sizes for race/ethnicity and gender are different, as many employees declined to respond to one or both of these questions (for privacy, personal comfort, or other reasons).

### Who do I contact if I have questions?

For questions, please contact [HOUSEstudies@mail.house.gov](mailto:HOUSEstudies@mail.house.gov).

## Dashboard Filters

### Why can I filter data based on specific categories in some dashboards or sections of dashboards but not in others?

Some data are only applicable to or available for the House overall (e.g., House-Wide Benefits, Factors Influencing House Compensation, Benefits, and Job Perceptions) or a specific job type (e.g., Chief of Staff items) and so filters are not available for those data.

### How is the tenure filter calculated? What category would a staffer fall into if their tenure is not equal to a whole number?

The eight tenure categories for Hill service were determined based on the logic in the following table.

Hill Tenure	Logic
<1 year	Any lengths of service less than 1 year
1-5 years	Lengths of service from exactly 1 year to exactly 5 years
6-10 years	Lengths of service above 5 years to exactly 10 years
11-15 years	Lengths of service above 10 years to exactly 15 years
16-20 years	Lengths of service above 15 years to exactly 20 years
21-25 years	Lengths of service above 20 years to exactly 25 years
26-30 years	Lengths of service above 25 years to exactly 30 years



30+ years

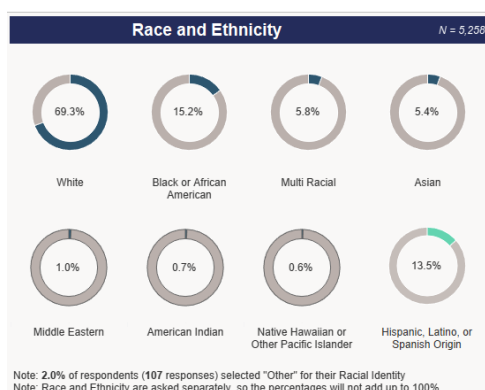
Any lengths of service above 30

To better understand, consider the following example: The data for a staffer who has served in the House for 5.5 years will be reported/included/categorized in the 6–10 tenure field.

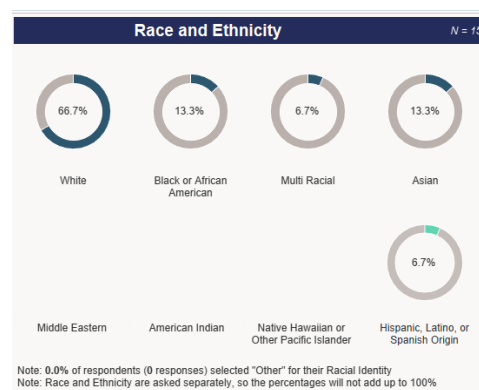
### Why do the graphics and figures within the widgets on some dashboards disappear (and reappear) when I select different filters?

A graphic or figure will disappear when there are no cases to display for a specific variable selection or if the total *N* (i.e., number of individuals who provided data on that item) is less than 5 responses. If you filter to another option that has data on that variable selection, the visual will reappear.

For example, in the screen shots below, the left graph displays all race and ethnicity visuals, but when filtered to a specific job title, three race categories do not display because no House staff selected those race categories within the specific job title.



Then filtered to a  
specific job title



## House Staff Demographic Representation Dashboard

### How do I view the relationships between demographic categories on the House Staff Demographics Representation dashboard?

Both House Staff Demographic Representation dashboards allow users to filter the results by staffers' office type, job level, job title, and duty station using the drop-down menus at the top of the page. Additionally, users can filter by demographic subgroups by clicking on the group of interest (e.g., women, Christians, staffers aged 26–32). To reset the filters, click the "Reset Filters" button in the upper right-hand corner of the page.

### Can I view the relationship between demographic categories included on different dashboards?

Although the drop-down filters selected will carry over from one demographic representation dashboard to the other, demographic data filtered by clicking on a specific

demographic category will only filter data on the demographics dashboard being viewed and will not filter data on the other demographic dashboard. For example, clicking on the “Women” icon on the House Staff Demographic Representation: Part 1 dashboard will filter to summarize the race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, and disability status data for women only, however, the demographic characteristics on House Staff Demographic Representation: Part 2 dashboard (e.g., age, faith) will not change. Note that drop-down filters selected do not carry over from one dashboard to another on any dashboards except the two demographic dashboards.

### **Why do you have more than two options for gender?**

Gender is a cultural (versus biological) construct, used to describe how individuals express themselves. As such, there are several terms individuals may use to describe their gender, including (but not limited to) man, woman, and non-binary.

## **House Labor Force Comparisons Dashboard**

### **What is the purpose of the comparisons on the House Labor Force Comparisons dashboard?**

Whereas the House Staff Demographic Representation dashboards highlight the demographic makeup of the House of Representatives’ staff population in isolation, the House Labor Force Comparisons dashboard allows users to contextualize the House of Representatives’ demographic information by viewing comparisons to the broader U.S. workforce. The comparators are presented to provide users with context when interpreting House of Representatives data and are not meant to serve as an ideal model for demographic representation.

### **Why are some demographic categories (e.g., certain ethnicities, genders) not displayed in all data views on the House Labor Force Comparisons dashboard?**

Only demographic categories that have sufficient sample sizes may be used for comparisons to the U.S. labor force and displayed on the House Labor Force Comparisons dashboards. For example, racial categories such as Middle Eastern/North African and Native Hawaiian have relatively small sample sizes and cannot be used for comparisons against the U.S. labor force and are not displayed in the dashboard. Likewise, comparisons were unable to be performed or displayed for non-binary staffers or transgender staffers, given their low sample size. Furthermore, comparisons are unable to be performed for multi-racial staffers, as our comparator data sources did not provide data on these individuals.



## Which labor force comparators are used on the House Labor Force Comparisons dashboard, and what information do they provide?

- **Civilian Labor Force (CLF)** provides data for the civilian noninstitutional population that are either employed in the private, state, or local sector or are unemployed.<sup>1</sup>
  - This provides an understanding of how the House's workforce compares to the *general population*.
- **Federal Workforce (FEDWF)** provides data from the Office of Personnel Management and covers over 2 million Federal civilian employees.<sup>2</sup>
  - This provides an understanding of how the House's workforce compares to the *overall Federal workforce*.
- **U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS)** provides national labor force data of the civilian noninstitutional population<sup>3</sup> for jobs that are like the House job types based on BLS' Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes (e.g., Whites at the Legislative Assistant/Aid job level).<sup>4</sup>
  - This provides an understanding of how the House's workforce compares to the *national labor force data for similar job types*.
  - Note that percentages for Member Office overall, Committee/Leadership Offices, and House Officer overall have been calculated and weighted based only on the House jobs listed within those Office types.

## What does the indicate on the House Labor Force Comparisons dashboard?

This icon denotes where a demographic group is underrepresented in the House compared to the labor force population (i.e., the number of employees in this category is significantly lower at the House than in the U.S. labor force). This determination was made when there was a statistically significant difference between the number of staffers at the House and employees in the U.S. labor force in this category (based on an  $\alpha$  level of .05), and this difference was at least small-moderate in size (based on estimates of practical significance).

To test for *statistical* significance, chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) analyses were performed, which are used to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between an expected

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020). *Labor force characteristics by race and ethnicity, 2019*. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2019/pdf/home.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (n.d.). *Federal employee reports*. <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/data-analysis-documentation/federal-employment-reports/>

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). Civilian noninstitutional population (current population survey). <https://www.bls.gov/bls/glossary.htm>

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Executive Office of the President Office of Management and Budget. (2018). *Standard occupation classification manual*.



frequency (i.e., predicted number of X)<sup>5</sup> and observed frequency (i.e., actual number of X) within a category. In this instance, the *expected frequency* is the number/percentage of employees within the broader U.S. labor force (identified using the labor force comparators), and the *observed frequency* is the number/percentage of employees within the House of Representatives.

To assess the *practical* significance of statistically significant findings (i.e., the *sizes* of the differences between the number of staffers at the House and employees in the U.S. labor force), Phi coefficients were calculated. Only differences with small, moderate, or large effect sizes (i.e.,  $\phi \geq .1$ ) are denoted with the (\*) symbol (i.e., negligible differences –  $\phi < .1$  – are not denoted, even when they are statistically significant).

When an icon appears, it does not confirm an issue exists. Rather, it indicates that there is an anomaly in the data that warrants further investigation.

## House Compensation Dashboard

### Why do the boxplots for the Federal and Private benchmarks look different than those of the House in 2021 and 2019 on the Compensation Dashboard?

Data for Federal and Private labor force benchmark comparisons come from the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OCWS) program, which resides in the BLS and produces annual wage estimates for nearly 800 U.S. occupations. These wage data consist of median and percentile estimates (i.e., 10th, 25th, 75th, and 90th). Maximum and minimum values are not reported and thus the boxplots do not contain “whiskers”.

### Will this information be used to make salary decisions?

This study helps the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion identify trends and understand the compensation staffers receive. Furthermore, the study gives both Chiefs of Staff and staffers a sense for the compensation various job titles receive across House. **The study is not intended to be used for staffing decisions.**

### How are Paid Intern salaries determined—the median seems high?

Paid Intern annual salary is provided by payroll (like all salary data). The annual salary for a Paid Intern is determined by multiplying the Intern’s monthly pay by 12, as though an intern

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<sup>5</sup> Expected values were calculated by dividing the number of respondents to the 2021 House Diversity and Compensation Study by the total number of respondents to the 2021 House Diversity and Compensation Study and number of employees included in the benchmark. This value was then multiplied by the number of respondents to the 2021 House Diversity and Compensation Study who identify with the category of interest (e.g., women).

were working an entire year. This makes comparisons to other House jobs more reasonable since they both use a 12-month scale.

Also, the Committee on House Administration (CHA) has set a minimum (\$1,200) and maximum (\$21,600) for paid intern annual salary, however, paid interns are only able to work up to 120 days per Employing Authority in a rolling 12 month period. Thus, the actual maximum amount of money an intern would take home is \$7,200 for the 120 days, which is at the maximum rate of pay (annualized to be \$21,600).

## House Office-Specific and House-Wide Benefits Dashboards

**Which benchmark data are used as comparators on the *House Office-Specific* and *House-Wide Benefits* dashboards, and what information do they provide?**

**The National Compensation Survey (NCS)**, conducted by BLS, examines and provides estimates on the incidence of benefits by the percentage of workers with access to and participating in employer-sponsored benefits plans. NCS collects information on a wide range of benefits that include access to health insurance, life insurance, retirement plans, holidays, vacation time, sick leave, and bereavement leave. This survey, conducted by field economists through establishment interviews, is limited to civilian workers and does not include workers employed in the Federal government. Based on the level of detail available for the benefit measures within NCS, the ICF team focused on data at the national level.

## House Job Characteristics and Perceptions Dashboard

### How can House tenure be greater than Hill and Government tenure?

House, Hill, and Government tenure were all obtained from House payroll data. House tenure was calculated based on the original House hire date and may display as longer than Hill or Government tenure, since breaks from House service are unknown and are not removed from House tenure calculations.

Government tenure includes time working for the U.S. Federal government (any agency, including House). Breaks in Federal government service of four (4) calendar days or more are removed.

Hill tenure includes time working for House, Senate, and any Legislative branch. Breaks in Hill service of four (4) calendar days or more are removed.

### What do you mean by “I believe the general climate within my office to be inclusive”?

This question is asking the extent to which the respondent feels that the U.S. House of Representatives “adheres to fair personnel practices” and integrates minority group staffers (e.g., staffers of color, women staffers) “into the work environment.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Mor Barak, M. E., Cherin, D. A., & Berkman, S. (1998). Organizational and personal dimensions in diversity climate: Ethnic and gender differences in employee perceptions. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 34, 82-104.